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no. 2.

TWO

SERMONS.

The FIRST preached upon

JANUARY the 29th. 168⅞.

Upon Occasion of

Her Majesties

HAPPY

CONCEPTION.

The SECOND,

JUNE the 17th. 1688.

UPON THE

BIRTH

OF THE

PRINCE.

By *John Turner*, Hospitaller of St. *Thomas Southwark*.

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SERMONS,

Her Majesties

CONSORT.

To the KING.

SIR,

THese Diſcourſes which were uttered in Obedience to Your Majeſties Command, and out of a Principle of Zeal and Loyalty to Your Sacred Perſon and Heroic Line, are now humbly proſtrate at Your Royal Feet, as a ſmall, but hearty and ſincere Teſtimony of the Duty and Gratitude of their Author.

God grant we may have more occaſion for Solemnities of this kind, and that Your Majeſty may live to ſee a numerous Iſſue, that may eſtabliſh and aſſure the Throne, and carry down the Image of Your Princely Virtues to the lateſt Poſterity of Times to come,

May it pleaſe Your moſt Sacred and Serene *Majeſty*,

Your Majeſties moſt Humble, Dutiful,

and Obedient Subject, and Servant,

JOHN TURNER.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Second Sermon, as may be ſeen by the Cloſe of the Firſt, and by its own Beginning, was deſigned only to be a Continuation of the Firſt, in which the Miſeries of Anarchy are diſplayed, as in the other, the Bleſſings of Government are repreſented; but being with very little Alteration and Addition, applicable to the Sacred and Auſpicious Birth upon which it was delivered, inſtead of being preparatory, as it was firſt deſigned, it is now humbly dedicated to the Service and Solemnity of that happy Day that gave us ſo delightful, and ſo ſweet a Proſpect of the continuance of thoſe Joys and Bleſſings that are the glorious Theme and Subject of it.

ERRATA.

IN *the firſt Sermon*, Pag. 30. l. 10. Read *Expreſly*. *Second Sermon*, p. 2. l. 10. r. *ſo particularly*. p. 5. l. 7. for *and*, r. *as*. l. 8. for *as*, r. *met*.

A

SERMON,

Preached upon

JANUARY the 29th. 1688.

Upon Occaſion of

Her Majeſties

HAPPY

CONCEPTION.

JUDG. 17. 6.

In thoſe Days there was no King in Iſrael, *but every Man did that which was right in his own Eyes.*

BEing unhappily prevented by Indiſpoſition, upon the Day appointed for this City and Subūrbs, and the Parts adjacent, to expreſs their Thankfulneſs to Almighty God, for the Hopes he hath given us

of aſcertaining the Succeſſion of the Royal Line, and eſtabliſhing the Throne for ever in a regular and peaceable Deſcent, by a new Proſpect of Majeſtic Iſſue, from the Loyns of our Sovereign and his Royal Conſort; I hope I ſhall be eaſily excuſed, if rather than be wholly wanting in my Duty upon ſo great and ſolemn an Occaſion, I have taken hold of this other Opportunity to offer up my worthleſs, but ſincere Oblation, at a time when the whole Nation is beleaguering Heaven, and laying ſiege to the Divine Goodneſs, for an happy and ſucceſful End of ſuch fair, auſpicious and promiſing Beginnings, and the Shout of a King is among them. Beſides, when I conſider how unfit I am to bear any part in ſo glorious a Scene, I ought to chuſe rather to appear in ſuch a numerous Multitude of Votaries, as may at once conceal and drown my Imperfections in a Cloud of Incenſe, and ſupply my Poverty, Infirmity and Weakneſs, by its united and confederate Strength.

Let us therefore, if you pleaſe, that we may take the truer Eſtimate, and have the more juſt and worthy Apprehenſions of that Extraordinary Bleſſing, which God in his Mercy ſeems to have deſigned us, if our Sins or our Ingratitude do not diſappoint it; begin at the

the Tragedies of Anarchy and Confuſion, or at that wretched and calamitous Condition of a miſerable People, which reſembles that of the *Iſraelites* after the Death of *Sampſon*, *When there was no King in* Iſrael, *but every Man did that which was right in his own Eyes.* The Conſequence of which, was *Firſt*, the Deſtruction of the National Religion of the Jews, and the crumbling it into numberleſs Parties and Diſtinctions, as appears immediately by the the Story of *Micah*, who conſecrated and ſet a part a proper and peculiar *Levite* for himſelf and Family; in the twelfth and thirteenth Verſes of this Chapter. *And* Micah *conſecrated the Levite, and the young Man became his Prieſt, and was in the Houſe of* Micah; *then ſaid* Micah, *now know I that the Lord will do me good, ſeeing I have a Levite to my Prieſt.* And as he had a *Levite*, ſo alſo a Religion peculiar to himſelf, and that Religion was no other than downright Idolatry, under pretence of Purity and Reformation. For in the fourteenth Verſe of the next Chapter, we find mention of his *Ephod* and his *Teraphim*, his graven and his molten Image; and this is very certain, by a long Courſe of Experience, that where there is not a common Band of Unity in the Civil Go-

vernment, there can be much leſs any face of Uniformity in Religious Worſhip; but Religion will naturally degenerate for the moſt part, from the Particular Fancies and Inclinations of Men left at random to determine for themſelves, either into Idolatry or Superſtition on the one hand, or into Prophaneneſs and Atheiſm on the other; but more eſpecially into the latter of theſe, becauſe where Property is deſtroy'd, as it is in ſuch a State, where there is no King, no Form of Government, no Law-making Wiſdom, no Executing Power, Neceſſity makes every thing become juſt and lawful, and the Judge of that Neceſſity is every Man's private Breaſt; ſo that Rapine puts on an Heroic Shape, and Violence, when ſucceſsful, hath the outward Semblance of a noble Magnanimity and commendable Courage. It is the Law only that firſt determines Property, and then ſecures it when it is determined; and where there is no Property, there muſt be endleſs Confuſion, by every Man's raking and ſcrambling for himſelf; ſo that every Man, in ſuch a State as this, is in apparent danger of immediate Ruine, it being impoſſible that either Strength or Counſel ſhould be of much avail in ſuch a Lawleſs and Arbitrary

Arbitrary Poſture of Affairs; but of all Men, they that are the moſt expoſed, are *Firſt*, the Infirm and Helpleſs, *Secondly*, the Raſh and Inconſiderate, that apprehend the leaſt of any Calamity likely to befall them; and *Thirdly* and laſtly, the Virtuous and Innocent, ſuch as are naturally inclined to Peace, and would fain be upon Terms of mutual Accommodation, and cannot think of continuing ſuch Hoſtilities as theſe, without Regret from within, as well as Terror from without; till at length it comes to paſs that Barbarity and Cruelty, and Treachery and Injuſtice growing epidemical and familiar things, and it ſeeming by that univerſal Miſery and Confuſion, in which Mankind is ſo deſperately involved, as if all things were govern'd by Miſ-rule and by Chance, and as if the Divinity took no manner of Care of the Peace, Welfare and Happineſs of Men, this naturally iſſues in at leaſt an Indifference for neglected Virtue, when it appears to have ſo ſmall a ſhare in the Favor and Patronage of Heaven, that Wickedneſs it ſelf is of the two more ſafe, and it proceeds by very eaſie and intelligible Steps to a Diſbelief of God's Providence, and a Contempt of his Attributes, till at laſt it ends, and ſets

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up its impious and abominable reſt, in a bold and barefac'd denial of his Exiſtence.

And this is the ſecond Conſequence which I intended to mention, as the neceſſary and unavoidable Event of there being no King in *Iſrael*, no Supream Judge, no Legiſlative or Executive Power, that by this means Property is deſtroyed, infinite Strife and Contention introduced, the Fences of Right and Juſtice broken down, and all Claims are decided by the ſtrongeſt Arm, and by the longeſt Sword. From whence it follows likewiſe, by multiplicity and frequency of bad Examples that Men are hardened and inured to Miſchief, ſunk into Atheiſm and Infidelity, and carried headlong by a double Torrent of Precedent and Perſwaſion, uniting and mingling their confederate Streams into all manner of Injuſtice, Impiety and Lewdneſs.

From hence it was that the *Danites*, in the very next Chapter, ſeized upon the *Ephod* and *Teraphim* the graven Image, and the molten Image of *Micah*, and carried his Prieſt along with them to be a Father and a Prieſt to themſelves, after a moſt unwarrantable and arbitrary manner, there being no King in *Iſrael*, nor any that might controul or contradict their Proceedings,

ings, or ſay unto them with Authority, *What do ye?* as *Micah* ſaid to them, but without it, in the eighteenth Verſe of that Chapter, to which they returned no Anſwer but a Menace, and the Cauſe was not decided by Argument but by Power. For the Children of *Dan* ſaid unto him, *Let not thy Voice be heard among us, leſt angry Fellows run upon thee, and thou looſe thy Life, with the Lives of thy Houſhold; and when* Micah *ſaw that they were too ſtrong for him, he turned back and went back unto his Houſe.* It is true, that all the *Iſraelites* had an expreſs Commiſſion to cut down the Groves of Heathens and Idolaters, to overthrow their Altars, and burn their graven Images with Fire, as often as they had Power and Opportunity to do it; but this was not the Caſe of the *Danites* at this time, who were as very Idolaters as the other, only they altered the Property from *Micah* to themſelves, ſo that they were guilty of Robbery, Idolatry and Sacriledge together; the Robbery conſiſted in the violent Detention of what was not their own, the Idolatry, in worſhiping the Images they had ſtollen, and the Sacriledge, in ſtealing what they account Sacred, and profaning what they worſhipped, by Rapine and Injuſtice. And not unlike to this it is,

what

what we find in the ſeventh Verſe of that Chapter, concerning the Men of *Laiſh*, to whom the five Men of the *Danites* were ſent as Spies: *The five Men departed*, ſaith the Text, *and came to* Laiſh, *and ſaw the People that were therein, how they dwelt careleſs, after the manner of the* Zidonians, *quiet, and ſecure, and there was no Magiſtrate in the Land that might put them to ſhame in any thing, and they were far from the* Zidonians, *and had no buſineſs with any Man.* Now this *Laſh* was otherwiſe called *Leſhem*, as it is in the 19*th.* of *Joſhua* at the 7*th.* Verſe, and was a Colony of the *Zidonians*, as appears very probable from this Place, and from the 28*th.* Verſe of this Chapter, where, when the *Danites* made their Aſſault upon it; it is ſaid, *There was no Deliverer, becauſe they were far from Zidon*, their Confederate City, from whence they were at firſt deſcended, and had not only brought along with them the ill Manners of that Place, which was to a Proverb infamous for all ſorts of Luxury and Vice, but there being no Law to regulate their Exorbitances, or to chaſtiſe and puniſh notorious Offenders, mutual Conſent added to reciprocal Example, where there was no Magiſtrate in the Land that might put them to Shame, and bring them

them to condign Puniſhment for their Offences, ſoon fill'd up the Meaſure of their crying Sins, and made them ripe for the Judgment that overtook them, Their City being burnt, and themſelves ſmitten by the *Danites* with the Edge of the Sword.

If by reaſon of their Impunity, and Want of Government, which is the Cauſe of all Miſchief and Diſorder in a Nation, they did not yet, notwithſtanding, fall out among themſelves; this is to be imputed to the ſmallneſs of their Number, for they were conquered by no more than ſix hundred Men, compared with the ſtrange Plenty and Exuberance of their Soil, a Place *where there was no Want of any thing that is on the Earth*, and conſequently with a very ſmall degree of Husbandry and Tillage, it was capable of affording them a plentiful Subſiſtance, without the Temptation of preying upon each other; To which we muſt refer likewiſe what the Text ſaith farther of them, *That they were far from the* Zidonians, *and had no buſineſs with any Man*: That is, they had no need of Traffic and Commerce, but gave themſelves up wholly to Pleaſure and Enjoyment, having ſo bountiful and rich a Soil to furniſh them at

Home with whatever they desired, and therefore *they were far from the Zidonians*, not only in respect of Distance or of Place, but in this also, that they were not a Bartering and a Trading People, as the *Zidonians* were, who were the greatest Merchants of those Days, and as they encreased in Wealth, so also in Luxury and Intemperance likewise, they imported the Vices of foreign Nations together with their Commodities, and united the Impieties of several Climates in one, and were known to be Merchants, not only by their Ships, and by their Wares, but by their Sins. *Lastly*, when it is said, as well of the Men of *Laish*, as of *Zidon*, *That they were a careless, a Quiet, and a secure People*; this is also to be ascribed to the Plenty of both Places, to the Natural Plenty of the one, and besides the Natural, to the Artificial Plenty of the other. For Plenty and Ease, do naturally soften and debase Men's Minds into a wanton Spirit of Effeminacy and Lust, into a Listless Habit of Idleness and Sloth, into a Fools Paradise of Security and Rest; though in the midst of Dangers round about them, and the Fumes of Wine that can raise Apparitions of imaginary Dangers, have usually no Sense of those that

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are certain and real. But this was by no means equally the Case of the *Zidonians*, and the Men of *Laish*; for the first were not only secure by Luxury and Intemperance, a sort of Security to which it is very ill quoting; but they had a fortified City, a formidable Fleet, a numerous People, and a spacious Territory, and could upon any Occasion furnish out an Army, that should be much superior to any of their Neighbours, and were, notwithstanding the Vices they were guilty of, ty'd together by an Establishment comparatively firm, under the Command of Magistrates, and the Obligation of Laws; so that they had reason to be secure and at rest, considering how easily they sate at Home, and how safe they were from any Apprehension Abroad.

But with the Men of *Laish* it was clean otherwise, they had no Magistrate, no Judge of Controversies, no Reconciler of Differences, no Avenger of Injustice, no Punisher of Offences; and besides this, they were but few in Number, they were situate in a Midland Country, and had no Advantage of Traffic and Commerce abroad, which begets Leagues and Dependencies among Men, that may be rely'd upon in a dangerous Time, they

were forſaken and forgotten by their very Country-men the *Zidonians* themſelves, and encompaſſed all about by Enemies and Strangers, ſo that their Security was indeed but a lethargick Stupour, which was owing either to Intemperance and Fulneſs, or elſe to a vain Perſwaſion which they ſeem to have had, becauſe their Neighbours for a long time never had attempted them, that they never would; but the Text inclines rather to the *Zidonian* Evil, whoſe Eaſe and Security was in part owing to the Steams of Gluttony, the Exceſs of Wine, and the Supinity of Dalliance and Enjoyment; and though the Text mentions no other Effect of that Anarchy that was to be found at that time among the Lawleſs Inhabitants of *Laiſh*, but only *that they were careleſs, and quiet, and ſecure, and having no Magiſtrate to put them to any Shame*, were grown to a ſhameleſs paſs of Luxury and Lewdneſs, yet upon ſuppoſition that they did not fall out and quarrel among themſelves, which is no more than a natural Effect of Anarchy and Miſ-rule, where all Men are Lords and Sovereigns by themſelves, and every one diſdains the Character of a Servant, and ſpurns at the very Thoughts of Obedience and Subjection; yet

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to be ſunk into Concupiſcence, and immerſt in Luſt, to have no ſenſe of Conſcience, of Honour, or of Shame, and to be given up wholly to the miſerable Conduct of brutal Appetites, and beaſtly Inclinations, are things, to wiſe and good Men, that ſhall ſeriouſly conſider them, more loathſome than Stench and Putrefaction themſelves, more intolerable than the moſt exquiſite and ingenious Torments, more dreadful than the moſt lingring, or the moſt ſhameful Death; they dethrone our Reaſon, they debaſe our Underſtandings, and rob us of thoſe true and limpid Pleaſures which ariſe only from Wiſdom and from Virtue, they imply an Anarchy in every private Breaſt, or which is ſtill worſe, if any thing can be worſe, they conſtitute ſuch a Government within our Souls, as when a Prince is governed by his Slaves, and they too Falling-out and Claſhing with one another, by the Competition of Paſſions among themſelves, and are a living and a ſtanding Infamy and Reproach to the nobleſt Faculties belonging to Humane Nature.

But if we reflect attentively upon the certain Conſequence of Gluttonny and Intemperance, which in the Experience of all Times and

and Places, is big with Animoſity in a thouſand Shapes, and with a numberleſs Variety of Miſchief and Diſorder, and if to this we add the fewneſs of their Number, being conquered, and all of them ſmitten with the Edge of the Sword, by a ſmall Party of ſix hundred Men; it will be highly probable, notwithſtanding that Quiet and Security they enjoyed; by which the Text means no more, than that they had no Apprehenſion of any Diſturbance or Danger from abroad; that yet at Home, in the midſt of ſo many, and ſo great Enormities, without any Magiſtrate to puniſh, or any Law to reſtrain them, they were ſeldom or never free from ſome Domeſtic and Inteſtine Broil, in which, though the whole Nation were not at a time engaged, yet it is enough if private Perſons, by the Rivalſhip of Love, or by the Surpriſe of unexpected Feuds, occaſioned by Wine or Luſt, or by the Ambition of Men, that in a lawleſs Eſtate, would every one endeavor to be greater than his Neighbour, did perpetually, from ſuch Cauſes and Accidents as theſe, deſtroy and ruine one another, and by new Grudges, everlaſtingly ſpringing and ſpawning from the old, hinder the Encreaſe and Propagation of their People.

For

For it is highly reasonable to believe, that this Nation or Colony of *Zidonian* Planters, were actually seated where the *Danites* found them, even before the coming of *Moses* out of *Ægypt*; and it is certain that *Joshua* found them there when he made the Partition of Inheritances to the Tribes, at which time, this very Place was conquer'd by the Tribe of *Dan*; but it seems, though the Inhabitants were beaten by the *Israelites*, and as many as could not secure themselves by Flight, or by Concealment, were smitten with the Sword, yet they were so far from being utterly destroyed, that afterwards they made Head again against their Enemies, and made them quit their new Conquest to the old Possessors, who enjoy'd it for some Ages afterwards, without Trouble or Molestation, and had now less reason to be afraid than ever, considering what it was not easie for them to be wholly ignorant of, that there was now no King in *Israel*, and that they had been formerly too hard for those who were now a dis-united and dis-joynted People, at a Time when their Strength was unanimous and compact, which was without question one reason of the Quiet and Security which they now enjoy'd, notwithstand-

ſtanding they were ſo ſmall and inconſiderable a People.

For to ſay that they were a numerous and a Powerful Nation, and yet that they were deſtroyed and utterly cut off by a poor Handful of ſix hundred Men, is to affirm they were deſtroy'd by Miracle, as the *Amorites*, and the *Perizzites* and other Nations were at the firſt entrance of the *Iſraelites* into the Land of *Canaan*; but this being only a ſupernatural Effect of the Divine Vengeance and Diſpleaſure, for the Inceſt, Idolatry, Beaſtiality and other horrid Crimes of thoſe accurſed Wretches, whom God had utterly devoted to Deſtruction, and reſolved to give their Land for an Inheritance to his choſen People; this reaſon will not hold with the *Danites* at this time, who were as very Idolaters as thoſe whom they deſtroyed, and therefore it is very unjuſt and unreaſonable to expect in ſuch a Caſe and Circumſtance as this, that any miraculous Aids ſhould be afforded them. Neither is it any more to the purpoſe, that they asked Counſel of the Prieſt of *Micah*, to know whether God would proſper their Undertaking, *and the Prieſt ſaid unto them, go in peace before, the Lord is the Way wherein ye go.* So that they ſeem to have

have acted by a Divine Commiſſion; for it is to be conſidered that this Prieſt of his was but a *Puiſne* Prieſt, or rather indeed he was no Prieſt at all, ſo far as that Office is of a Sacrificial Nature, for he was not of the Sons of *Aaron*, but only a *Common Levite*, and he was conſecrated to the Prieſthood by *Micah*, againſt the Expreſs Inſtitution of the Law of *Moſes*, as he likewiſe conſecrated one of his own Sons in the fifth Verſe of that Chapter, but had no Right or Authority to do either. *Secondly*, It is plain by the Text, that he was an Idolater, and therefore had no reaſon to expect any ſuch extraordinary Aſſiſtances from Above, as ſhould acquaint him with the ſecret Deſigns of God's Providence, in the Adminiſtration and Government of the World. *Thirdly*, The only way of oracular Reſponſes to be met with among the *Jews*, was by the *Urim* and *Thummim*, which was peculiar to the *High Prieſt* alone, and never in any one Inſtance communicated or vouchſafed to any other but him. *Fourthly*, He might conſider the ſeeming Fairneſs and Juſtice of their Cauſe, they going only to retreive their own, and to recover again into their own Poſſeſſion, what their Anceſtors had formerly enjoyed. *Fifth-*

ly and laſtly, It may very well be ſuppoſed that he was afraid to give a diſſatisfactory Anſwer to ſo many armed Men, leſt they ſhould ſay to him as *Agamemnon* did to *Chalcas* in *Homer*,

Μάντι κακῶν ἐπόπτη μοι τὸ κρήγυον εἶπας.

or as *Ahab* did concerning the Prophet *Micajah*, *I hate him, for he doth not propheſie Good concerning me, but Evil.*

So that I think upon the whole Matter, it is abundantly manifeſt, that the Strength of the Men of *Laiſh* being very much weakned and impaired by Civil Broils, for want of good Laws to ſettle the Bounds and Meaſures of Obligation, and Magiſtrates to puniſh the Refractory and Diſobedient, whatever preſent Accommodation there might be patched up among them, by mutual dread of one another, and mutual Experience of ſo many Ills, as Lawleſs and Arbitrary Courſes had occaſioned, and whatever Eaſe and Security they might promiſe themſelves from abroad, not having heard of any Enemy for ſo long a time, yet they became an eaſie Prey from both of theſe Cauſes together, to this unexpected and ſurpriſing Party of the Children of *Dan*. To all which, it is ſtill farther

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to be added, that a diſſolute and licentious People, ſeaſon'd and habituated in exorbitant Courſes, though they may in time be ſenſible of the great and public Detriment that accrues from them, and be perſwaded, by that means, to think of a Regulation for the Redreſs of ſuch grievous Mischiefs and Abuſes; yet they ſcarce know how to give Obedience to thoſe Laws, which they are convinced to be ſo neceſſary for them, but find a certain awkwardneſs and unaptneſs in themſelves to be confin'd within any compaſs of Duty, like untaught Heifers, that never felt the Yoak, or Colts that never yet were back'd, or Horſes not ſufficiently inured to their Paces or their Harneſs. And as it would be very difficult in this Caſe, and for a while impracticable to reduce the People into ſuch a State of Obedience as is neceſſary to the Peace and Security of every Common-wealth, ſo it would be much more ſo, to find a fit Governor to preſide over them, becauſe Government requires a ſteady Reſolution, and a conſummate Wiſdom, neither of which are requiſite to Obedience, only the Subject is in general to underſtand: *Firſt*, the Wholſomeneſs of Obedience, for the Conſervation of Peace, and for the uniting a Nation in one common

Band againſt all foreign Oppoſers. And *Secondly*, The Duty that is incumbent upon him, upon account of both of theſe Conſiderations, to reſign up himſelf chearfully to the Supream Power, for the Common Good of himſelf and of his Country. Government requires a Courage that is not to be daunted by every ſturdy Pretender to Liberty of Action, nor every bold Cenſurer of the Conduct of Affairs, and the Adminiſtration of his Betters at the Helm, let his Pretences be as ſpecious as they will, it requires a Wiſdom that looks far backwards into the good and bad Succeſſes of paſt Times, and into the Reaſons upon which they ſeverally depended, a Wiſdom that looks forward, and pries with Warineſs and deep Deliberation, into the natural Iſſues and Reſults of Things; and a Wiſdom that is conſummate by Experience, in the Management of Affairs, by which a Facility and Dexterity of Action and of Counſel is acquired, as well as by reflection upon the Occurrences of former Times, and Speculation into Humane Nature; without which, no Governour can ſufficiently diſcharge himſelf of the great Truſt that is repoſed in him.

Now in this Caſe of a diſſolute and broken People, whoſe Necks of a long time had

not

no felt the Yoak, as it would require much greater Wiſdom and Experience to pilot and conduct a ſhattered Veſſel through Paſſions and Prejudices not eaſily to be conquered or charmed into Obedience, and which like Rocks and Shelves, not taken notice of by any Sea-chart, like moving Sands, without any Buoys to diſcover them, would every moment endanger the Ship-wrack of the State, than to govern an eſtabliſh'd and orderly Society, that hath been inured to Laws, and ſenſible of the great Advantages accruing by them; ſo it would be much harder to find a Perſon fit for ſuch a weighty Charge in a Government that needs it moſt, then in a ſetled and well regulated State, where half thoſe Abilities would ſerve the turn. Beſides that, the Competition of Pretenders to the Supream Power, and the ſeveral Factions aiding and abetting either the one or the other, would create new Strife, inſtead of compoſing the old, and after all, a wiſe Man, though unanimouſly choſen, would ſcarce accept ſo dangerous a Charge, wherein he would be more likely to make himſelf a Victim to the variable Humors of a giddy Multitude, impatient of Subjection, and unaccuſtomed to Reſtraint, and diſdaining

daining to be controuled and check'd by him that was ſo lately their Equal, than to preſerve his Country, by his Wiſdom and Courage, from its impending Ruine and Deſolation. No wonder therefore, if the Men of *Laiſh*, being without any Government or Laws, and being probably at variance among themſelves, and being ſurpriſed of a ſuddain by an unexpected Aſſault, and their Security adding new Horror to the Surpriſe, and contributing in ſo great a Proportion to their Ruine, they were for all and every of theſe Reaſons, an eaſie Prey to the Fury of their Enemies, and fell a tame Sacrifice to the Revenge of the *Danites*.

But without reaſoning ſo nicely upon an imperfect account, wherein ſo much is of neceſſity to be ſupplied by conjecture, the next Chapter will afford us a more expreſs Deſcription of the horrid Calamities to which Anarchy is Expoſed, for there we have firſt the Story of the Levite and his Concubine, or rather Wife, for ſhe is accuſed of being falſe to his Bed. *And his Concubine*, ſaith the Text, *play'd the Whore againſt him, and went away from him unto her Fathers Houſe to* Bethlehem Judah, *and was there four whole Months.* Now Adultery was Death

Death in both Parties, by the Law of *Moſes*; nay, the Guilt of this horrid Crime was underſtood to lye at the Door of the Congregation, and was threatned to be avenged upon the People themſelves, if they did not expiate it by the Death of the Offenders. Deut. 22. 22. *If a Man be found lying with a Woman, married to an Huſband, then they ſhall both of them die, both the Man that lay with the Woman, and the Woman, ſo ſhalt thou put away Evil from* Iſrael. And this was ſtill a more criminal ſort of Adultery, becauſe it was a Levites Wife, a Perſon dedicated and ſet apart to the Service of God, and to the Miniſtry of that Temple in which he had placed his Name, and whether all the Tribes of *Iſrael* were to repair for Sacrifice and Worſhip. It was much the more hainous Offence in both of the Delinquent Parties upon this account, and therefore the Obligation to puniſh it was ſo much the ſtronger, but this not being to be done without a formal Proceſs, in which the Criminals were to be firſt convict, and then adjudged to undergo the legal Sentence in caſes of that nature, at a time when there was no Judge in *Iſrael*, no Supreme, nor by conſequence any ſubordinate Magiſtrate to hear and determine Cauſes, there could be no Proceſs,

ceſs, no Sentence, no Execution. And ſo it came to paſs, not long after, either, by a Return of Affection on the Husbands Part, or by ſome advantagious Overtures of Reconciliation on that of the Wife and her Relations, that the Buſineſs, as foul as it was, was made up, and they aſſociated together again; but this continued but for a very little while, when leaving *Bethlehem Judah*, where the Father of the Woman dwelt, and going homewards through *Gibeah* of *Benjamin*, and lodging there in the Houſe of an hoſpitable *Ephraimite*, the *Man* was firſt demanded by the lewd and lawleſs Inhabitants of the Place, to be uſed as the *Sodomites* would have ſerved the Gueſts of *Lot*, and at laſt, the leaſt thing that would appeaſe their Belluine and Brutal Luſt, was the abuſing his Wife to ſuch a degree, that ſhe died upon the Place, and being divided by her Huſband into twelve Pieces, which were ſent ſeverally to ſo many ſeveral Tribes, to be an horrid Spectacle and Monument of what had happened, and to incite them the more effectually to a juſt Revenge of ſo flagitious and villanous an Action upon the execrable Authors of it, this occaſioned that dreadful Civil War which followed betwixt the Tribe of *Benjamin* and

and the reſt of the Tribes, who being under no legal Tye of Obligation to one another, and being now deſtitute of a common Head that might command and influence them all, yet met together by common Conſent at *Mizpeh*, and from thence demanded ſatisfaction of the *Benjamites*, for the horrid Wickedneſs committed by the *Gibeathites* their Brethren, and for the Scandal that was brought by it, upon the Name and Nation of *Iſrael*, which nothing could wipe off, but the Death of thoſe Miſcreants that were guilty of it; but the *Benjamites* were ſo far from delivering up their Brethren to be puniſh'd as they deſerv'd, that they appeared in their Defence, and were reſolved, as bad as they were, to ſtand up in the Protection of their Lives, with the Hazard of their own, upon which, immediately enſued that bloody War, in which forty thouſand of the *Iſraelites*, and of the *Benjamites*, the whole Tribe, without ſparing either Age or Sex, bateing only ſix hundred, were deſtroyed; nay, their very Cattle and their Cities were not exempted, but a deadly Infection ran through all they poſſeſt, and overwhelm'd every thing in the common Ruine. So that in this one Story, though we go no farther, we have a promiſ-

cuous Luſt, a brutal Concupiſcence, and a deſtructive War, Crimes not to be named without confuſion and bluſhing, and Judgments not to be mentioned without trembling, and all for want of a Judge and a King in *Iſrael*, whoſe Authority might prevent the Perpetration of ſuch Villany, or at leaſtwiſe puniſh the beginnings of it, before it proceeded to ſuch a bloody Conſequence, and tragical Concluſion.

But this is not all neither, for if I am not very much miſtaken, there was a Famine likewiſe happened upon this occaſion, for in the Book of *Ruth* we read that *in the Days when the Judges rul'd, there was a Famine in the Land*, upon which *Elimelech* and his Wife *Naomi*, and his two Sons *Mahlon* and *Chilion* went and ſojourned in the Country of *Moab*, where *Elimelech* and his two Sons died, and *Naomi*, after having dwelt there ten years, *aroſe with her Daughters in Law, that ſhe might return from the Country of* Moab, *for ſhe had heard in the Country of* Moab, *how that the Lord had viſited his People in giving them Bread.* Now though it be ſaid that this happened in the Days when the Judges rul'd, all that is meant by it is no more than this, that the inſpired Writer who wrote this Book, wrote it a conſide-

rable time afterwards, in the time of the Kings, and by the *Days of the Judges*, or *when the Judges rull'd*, all that Period or Interval of time is underſtood, which paſſed between *Joſhua*, or rather between *Moſes* the firſt Judge, and *Saul* the firſt King of *Iſrael*; and the Age of *Ruth* falls juſt upon the Cloſe of this Account, for her Son was *Obed*, who was the Father of *Jeſſe*, the Father of *David*; ſo that the Times of *Obed* and *Jeſſe* muſt be coincident with thoſe of *Eli* and *Samuel*, the laſt Judges of *Iſrael*, and the beginning of the Reign of *Saul*, the firſt King; and ſince we have no mention of any Judge of *Iſrael* after *Sampſon*, before *Eli*, it muſt needs appear very likely, that this Famine hapned after the Death of *Sampſon*, when there was no King or Judge in *Iſrael*, when the want of Laws made Induſtry to ceaſe, and Husbandry to fall to Ruine and Decay, and when the Animoſities and Contentions that hapned in thoſe days, were a Diſcouragement to the Husband-man from ſetting his Hand to the Plow, or ſcattering the Seeds upon the Earth in their Seaſon, when he had ſo little ſecurity that he ſhould reap the Encreaſe. And otherwiſe than this it will ſeem utterly impoſſible, without a perpetual Miracle all that

while, that in *Moab*, a neighbouring Country, there ſhould be ſo great Plenty for ten years together, and yet ſo great Scarcity in the Land of *Iſrael*, the Land of *Canaan* that flowed with Milk and Honey, and was naturally ſo rich and plentiful a Spot of Ground, for it is not without a miraculous Interpoſition of Divine Providence, that Countries naturally fruitful, and being of the ſame Soil and Climate, and very nearly bordering upon each other, ſhould the one be afflicted with a ten years Famine, while the other, all that while, was not only able to ſuſtain it ſelf, but to ſupply the Neceſſities of its Neighbours, and we are certainly informed, that when the ſeaven years Famine was in *Ægypt*, there was the ſame Scarcity in the Land of *Canaan*, and other neighbouring Countries in that Part of the World, only the Wiſdom and propheticFore-ſight of *Joſeph*, who was then the chief Miniſter in *Pharaoh's* Court, had made a better Proviſion by Good-huſbandry, in the Time of Plenty, for the Neceſſities of *Ægypt*, than any of the neighbour Nations had made for themſelves; ſo that it appears very reaſonable to think, that a Famine was one of thoſe diſmal Conſequences that attended the Anarchy or want of Government among

mong the *Jews*, after the Death of *Samſon*, and the Expreſſion of *Naomi* is remarkable, *That the Lord had viſited his People in giving them Bread*; he viſited them by giving them Bread, and he gave them Bread by viſiting them, that is, by ſetting a Viſitor or Inſpector over them, a Judge that might retrench the Exorbitances, and redreſs the Abuſes under which they groaned, for as *Phacad* in Hebrew ſignifies to *viſit*, ſo does *Phakid*, derived from it, ſignifie a *Viſitor* or Inſpector, a Governour, a Judge, a King, or any one that is inveſted with a Legiſlative and Coercive Power, and as Mercy and Juſtice do equally belong to the Notion and Character of ſuch a Perſon, ſo God himſelf, who is the great Sovereign and Potentate of the World, as well when he inflicts his Judgments, as beſtows his Mercy, is ſaid to viſit Mankind.

I ſhall conclude theſe Obſervations upon the Text and Context, with obſerving how careful the inſpired Pen man of this Book of *Judges* is, to let us know that all theſe Enormities and Calamities which he recounts, were the Effects and Iſſues of there being no King in *Iſrael*, though indeed he does not ſay ſo in ſo many Words, but he does as plainly imply it as any thing

thing can be. For when he tells us the Story of *Micah*, and his *Ephod* and Prieſt, he tells us alſo at the ſame time, *In thoſe days there was no King in* Iſrael, *but every Man did that which was right in his own Eyes.* And the ſame Words are again repeated in the next Chapter, where the *Danites* of their own Heads, without any Order or Commiſſion, to that purpoſe, make War upon the Men of *Laiſh*, and of the eaſie Conqueſt they obtained the reaſon is expreſs aſſigned, becauſe the Men of *Laiſh dwelt careleſs, after the manner of the* Zidonians, *and becauſe there was no Magiſtrate in the Land that might put them to ſhame in any thing*; ſo that they were a looſe and a divided People; and immediately before the Story of the Levite and his Concubine, which drew ſuch diſmal Conſequences after it, it is again inculcated and repeated, *And it came to paſs in thoſe days, when there was no King* Iſrael, *that there was a certain Levite*, &c. And *Laſtly*, In the Concluſion of the whole Book, where the Children of *Iſrael*, after the War with *Benjamin*, disband and fall in pieces again, going every Man to his own Tent, and after his own Imagination, he ends as he began, with the ſame remarkable Words, *In thoſe days there was no King in* Iſrael,

every

every Man did that which was right in his own Eyes; and then in probability that Famine followed which I have now newly deſcribed.

But it is in vain to purſue this Argument any farther, the Miſeries of Anarchy are ſo many and ſo great, that there is no Tongue ſufficient to expreſs them, nor any Conception large enough to comprehend them; they are as variable as the Paſſions and Deſigns of Men, or the Occaſions upon which they happen, and as Bloody, as Cruelty, Ambition, Injuſtice and Revenge can make them; and if the Reins of Diſcipline were let looſe upon our Necks, or the Bridle of Obedience perfectly taken off, and every Man let alone to abound in his own Senſe, and purſue his own Imaginations as far as he thought fit, it would ſoon come to paſs that the World, by the interfering Paſſions, and incompoſſible Deſires and Appetites of unreaſonable Men, would be turned into a Wilderneſs of Thorns and Briars, a Den of Thieves, a Foreſt of wild Beaſts, a *Chaos* of Confuſion, a miſerable Spectacle of Deſtruction and of Death diſplaying and brandiſhing its frightful Terrors in a thouſand ſeveral ghaſtly and lamentable Forms, a Theatre fill'd with deſperate Gladiators, perpetually goring and ſtabbing one another, a Slaughter-houſe for Innocence, an inextricable Snare for Weakneſs, a Temple, but not a Sanctuary

ary for Oppreſſion, a Region of Devils in the Shape of Men; ſo that the old War betwixt the Giants and the Gods, which the Poets have repreſented, as much the moſt terrible and outragious thing that even Fancy and Fable would ſtretch themſelves to conceive, would of a ſuddain ceaſe to be Romantic any longer, and inſtead of being Fabulous, as it now appears, it would paſs for a cold and an imperfect Truth, not worthy the Name of a Poetical Contrivance, nor fit to be compared with the real Animoſities that would intoxicate and embroil Mankind. It is but fit therefore in the midſt of ſuch horrid and diſmal Apparitions, as the Conſideration of Anarchy preſents us with, before we enter upon the bleſſed and the glorious Scene of Eſtabliſhment and Order, to let down ſoftly the Curtain of Confuſion, that our Thoughts may be compoſed and quiet, as the ſerene, beautiful and peaceful Subject about which they are to be employ'd, and that we may reliſh the better the Happineſs of Government, and pray the more heartily for the Continuance of it, and for the Birth of a Prince, that may render Empire in an everlaſting Succeſſion, Hereditary to himſelf and his Deſcendents, and entail Peace, Righteouſneſs, Charity and Plenty upon all the Subjects of this Imperial Crown, as long as the Sun continues to be conſtant, or the Moon to change.

F I N I S.